

Message Text

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44

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FM AMCONSUL HAMBURG

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 2842

INFO AMEMBASSY BONN PRIORITY

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AMCONSUL DUESSELDORF

AMCONSUL FRANKFURT

AMCONSUL MUNICH

AMCONSUL STUTTGART

C O N F I D E N T I A L HAMBURG 0313

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, GW

SUBJECT: SCHLESWIG-HOLSTEIN COMMUNAL ELECTIONS

REF: (A) HAMBURG 289; (B) HAMBURG 218

1. AS PREDICTED THE CDU WON ANOTHER STUNNING ELECTORAL VICTORY IN THE MARCH 24 COMMUNAL ELECTIONS IN SCHLESWIG-HOLSTEIN. BY COMPARISON WITH THE 72.3 PERCENT TURNOUT FOR THE COMMUNAL ELECTIONS IN 1970, 79.1 PERCENT OF THE ELECTORATE WENT TO THE POLLS ON THIS OCCASION. IN THE 4 MAJOR CITY COUNCILS AND THE 11 COUNTY COUNCILS, THE CDU POLLED 53.1 PERCENT OF THE VOTE COMPARED TO THE 45.4 PERCENT OF THE VOTE IT RECEIVED IN 1970; THE SPD DROPPED TO 35.6 PERCENT AS COMPARED WITH THE 43.5 PERCENT IT RECEIVED IN 1970; AND THE FDP IMPROVED ITS ELECTORAL POSITION SOMEWHAT BY MOVING UP FROM ITS PREVIOUS 5.7 PERCENT TO 9 PERCENT THIS TIME. THE SSW, THE POLITICAL PARTY OF THE DANISH MINORITY

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IN FLENSBURG AND TWO COUNTY COUNCILS, SUFFERED A SLIGHT SETBACK

FROM 1.7 PERCENT TO 1.6 PERCENT.

2. IT IS INTERESTING TO OBSERVE THAT THE DISSENSION WITHIN THE SPD IN LUEBECK AND IN PINNEBERG, AS NOTED IN REFTL (B), RESULTED, AS WE ANTICIPATED, IN THE LOSS OF THE SPD'S PREVIOUS MAJORITY POSITION TO THE CDU IN THE CITY COUNCIL OF LUEBECK AND THE BREAKING OF THE TIE IN THE COUNTY COUNCIL OF PINNEBERG BETWEEN THE SPD AND THE CDU WITH A MAJORITY VICTORY FOR THE CDU THERE.

3. THE FOLLOWING ARE NOW THE RELATIVE POSITIONS OF THE POLITICAL PARTIES IN THE 4 MAJOR CITY COUNCILS:

A. FLENSBURG - THE CDU WON A PLURALITY AS PREDICTED. THE SPD MAY CONTINUE, HOWEVER, TO ENJOY AN UNEASY GOVERNING COALITION WITH A RESTIVE AND DISSENSION THREATENED SSW.

B. KIEL - THE CDU WON A PLURALITY. THE FDP, AS WE EXPECTED, SUCCEEDED IN CROSSING THE 5 PERCENT THRESHOLD AND WINNING 4 SEATS. TOGETHER, THEREFORE, THE SPD AND THE FDP WILL FORM A GOVERNING COALITION.

C. LUEBECK - THE CDU WON A MAJORITY AS PREDICTED.

D. NEUMUENSTER - THE CDU WON A MAJORITY AS PREDICTED.

4. OUR PREVIOUS ASSESSMENT OF POTENTIAL CDU STRENGTH IN THE NEWLY REORGANIZED 11 COUNTIES WAS SOMEWHAT CONSERVATIVE. INSTEAD OF A CDU MAJORITY VICTORY IN 10 COUNTY COUNCILS AND A PLURALITY VICTORY IN 1, THE PARTY SWEEPED THE SLATE CLEAN WITH A MAJORITY VICTORY IN ALL 11 COUNTY COUNCILS.

5. THE SPD POSTMORTEMS HAVE BEEN SIMILAR TO THE LAMENTS WE HEARD IN HAMBURG FOLLOWING THE RECENT STATE ELECTIONS HERE. SPD LANDTAG FLOOR LEADER, KLAUS MATTHIESEN, AND SPD DEPUTY LAND LEADER, ECKART KUHLEWEIN, HAVE EACH LAID THE BLAME FOR THEIR PARTY'S DEFEAT ON VOTER DISSATISFACTION WITH A GENERALLY IRRESOLUTE AND LACKLUSTER COALITION GOVERNMENT IN BONN. FOR HIS PART, MINISTER PRESIDENT GERHARD STOLTENBERG IS OBVIOUSLY DELIGHTED WITH HIS PARTY'S VICTORY. HIS FIRST PUBLIC STATEMENT

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AFTER THE OFFICIAL RESULTS WERE ANNOUNCED LAST NIGHT WAS, HOWEVER, TO CAUTION HIS PARTY FROM SAVORING ITS VICTORY WITH TOO MUCH GUSTO AND RELAXING ITS EFFORTS BEFORE THE NEXT HURDLE IN NIEDERSACHSEN IN JUNE. HOWEVER, THERE IS NO DISGUISSING STOLTENBERG'S DELIGHT IN THE SHARE HE CAN RIGHTLY CLAIM FOR HIS PARTY'S VICTORY OR HIS WISHFUL THINKING THAT THESE COMMUNAL ELECTIONS HAVE SET, ALBEIT IT PREMATURELY, THE STAGE FOR THE LANDTAG ELECTIONS IN SCHLESWIG-HOLSTEIN NEXT YEAR WHICH, IF

EQUALLY DRAMATIC, COULD CATAPULT STOLTENBERG INTO HIS PARTY'S
FRONT RUNNING POSITION AS CDU BUNDESTAG CANDIDATE IN 1976.
BROGAN

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